(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Sir, I got the answer. सर, जवाब मिल गया है। I am satisfied.

*312. [The questioner (Shri Lalit Suri) was absent. For answer *vide* page 47]

**Funds for private telecom operators for rural telephony**

*313. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have planned to provide funds to private operators to create telecom infrastructure in rural areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any target has been fixed for those operators to provide telephone facilities in rural areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

*Statement*

(a) to (e) A proposal is under active consideration of the Government to provide support for shareable infrastructure to the eligible access service providers and infrastructure service providers for providing cellular mobile services in rural and remote areas of the country. Consultations have been held with the Access Service Providers, Infrastructure Providers, Association of Telecom Service Providers and Manufacturers in this regard. To enable such support, a bill to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 is proposed to be introduced during the Budget Session 2006.

SHRI C. PERUMAL: Sir, first of all, the answer is not complete. I would like to know whether any target has been fixed for BSNL and other

private telecom operators to provide phone connections in rural areas. If so, what are the details?

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, the hon. Member wanted to know whether any funds are being created for telecom infrastructure for rural areas. I have mentioned it very clearly that there is a proposal in the DoT to use the USO fund so as to support the passive infrastructure to enable mobile connection in the rural areas. Already, under the USO fund, basic services are being provided in those villages, which are not profitable.

SHRI C. PERUMAL: Sir, I would like to know whether BSNL has achieved the target for providing telephones in rural areas and if not, then what are the reasons? I have one more doubt. I would like to know whether Government is aware that the service is very poor in BSNL and MTNL mobile phones, considering that the person has to try many times before getting connections from one phone to another phone. If so, what action has been taken upon it?

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, I have already answered the first part.

*314. [The questioner (Shri Rajkumar Dhoot) was absent. For answer *vide* page 47]

**Autonomous Colleges**

*315. PROF. P.J. KURIAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give permission for more autonomous colleges;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of such autonomous colleges in the State of Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

***Statement***

(a) and (b) The status of autonomous colleges is granted by the affiliating